DETAILED MEETING REPORT

CONFIDENTIAL

Document Type: Detailed Meeting Report

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To: Mr. Ze'ev A. Sofot, Embassy, Washington (2 copies)

From: Sh. Yilon, Atlanta

SUBJECT: Report of Meeting with Dr. Martin Luther King

After many delays related to Dr. King's frequent tours and my absences from the office, I held a thorough conversation with him on December 3.

At the outset, he mentioned that he has an "open invitation" from the Government of Israel and also from the Histadrut to visit the country, and for four years he has been trying to do this, but now he hopes he will be able to travel in the first half of 1966.

After an exchange of praise and compliments about what is being done in the country [Israel] and about his great successes, we talked for close to an hour about all the problems that could be mentioned:

Education Programs

From HEAD START to adult education. In his opinion, the efforts here are in the right direction but too few and too late, and he fears that such a slow start will create a false impression among those who need help that all these programs are only for show. I could only agree with him and also added that from the little I have seen,

they have not yet known how to recruit teachers and instructors from the underdeveloped strata, and that the people in the mechanisms of these institutions give the impression as if they are helping voluntarily - something that indicates a lack of seriousness; and this when the Negro colleges are full of people who are absolutely capable of filling the ranks of these teachers and instructors.

Economic and Vocational Issues

Dr. King analyzed the economic problems of the persistent unemployment that is growing and increasing because of automation. He emphasized with regret that the system of vocational education is not developed at all. He was very impressed by my comment that we consider the army as an important educational institution. He very much wanted to know - unofficially of course - what our position is on Vietnam, and it was good that I had received guidance on this several days ago, and I answered accordingly.

Development and International Relations

From here the conversation developed to the problems of development, and I noted that there is here a "race against time": if the developed countries succeed in raising the cultural level of the peoples of the developing world to such an extent that they know how to participate in establishing a healthy government, all the effort being made now will pay off and there will be room to hope for coexistence between peoples, and there will be hope to eliminate the revolutionary Chinese idea.

In this context, Dr. King asked what could be done to raise the prestige of the USA since the number of peoples who think of the USA as an "aggressor" is now growing, and in response I pointed out the good influence of the PEACE CORPS and expressed my hope that the time will not be far when they will recruit in the USA a larger number of workers for the PEACE CORPS than they recruit for the U.S. military.

We also went over a not-small list of mutual acquaintances and friends, and Dr. King suggested that we meet for these conversations more frequently instead of random meetings as until now, and he will also organize a dinner with his colleagues for detailed conversations on special topics.

Shimon Yilon

Copy: Mr. Moshe Bitan, Jerusalem
Mr. Mordechai Lador, Washington

f the civil rights movement and his difficulty in finding time for international travel. This reflects the intense pressure he was under during this period. **4.4 Strategic Timing:** The suggestion that King visit Israel in connection with the Organization of African Unity meeting in Ghana demonstrates strategic thinking about maximizing the impact of his visit. **4.5 Pilgrimage vs. Political Visit:** The evolution from a government-sponsored visit to a religious pilgrimage reflects the different dimensions of King's potential visit and the various stakeholders involved.

5. Historical Significance

Important Context: This correspondence takes place during a critical period in both American civil rights history and Israeli state development. Dr. King was leading the struggle for racial equality in America while Israel was still relatively young as a state, dealing with security challenges and building international relationships.

The warm reception King received from Israeli leadership, including direct correspondence from Prime Minister Eshkol, demonstrates the significance Israel attached to relationships with international civil rights leaders.

Unfortunately, Dr. King was assassinated in April 1968 before he could make his planned pilgrimage to Israel, making this correspondence particularly poignant as it represents unfulfilled plans for international engagement.

6. Document Classification

This collection includes:

- Official government correspondence from Israeli Foreign Ministry
- Personal and professional letters from attorneys and diplomats
- Internal memoranda between Israeli officials
- Letters from Israeli Prime Minister and other government officials
- Responses from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his organization

These documents provide valuable insight into the diplomatic relationship between Israel and American civil rights leaders during the 1960s, as well as the international dimensions of the civil rights movement.

Document 16 - Historical Correspondence Archive Summary
Period: 1962-1967 | Collection: MLK-Israel Correspondence
Total Documents: 15 | Classification: Historical Archive
Preservation Note: These documents represent authentic historical correspondence and have been translated and preserved for scholarly and historical research purposes.